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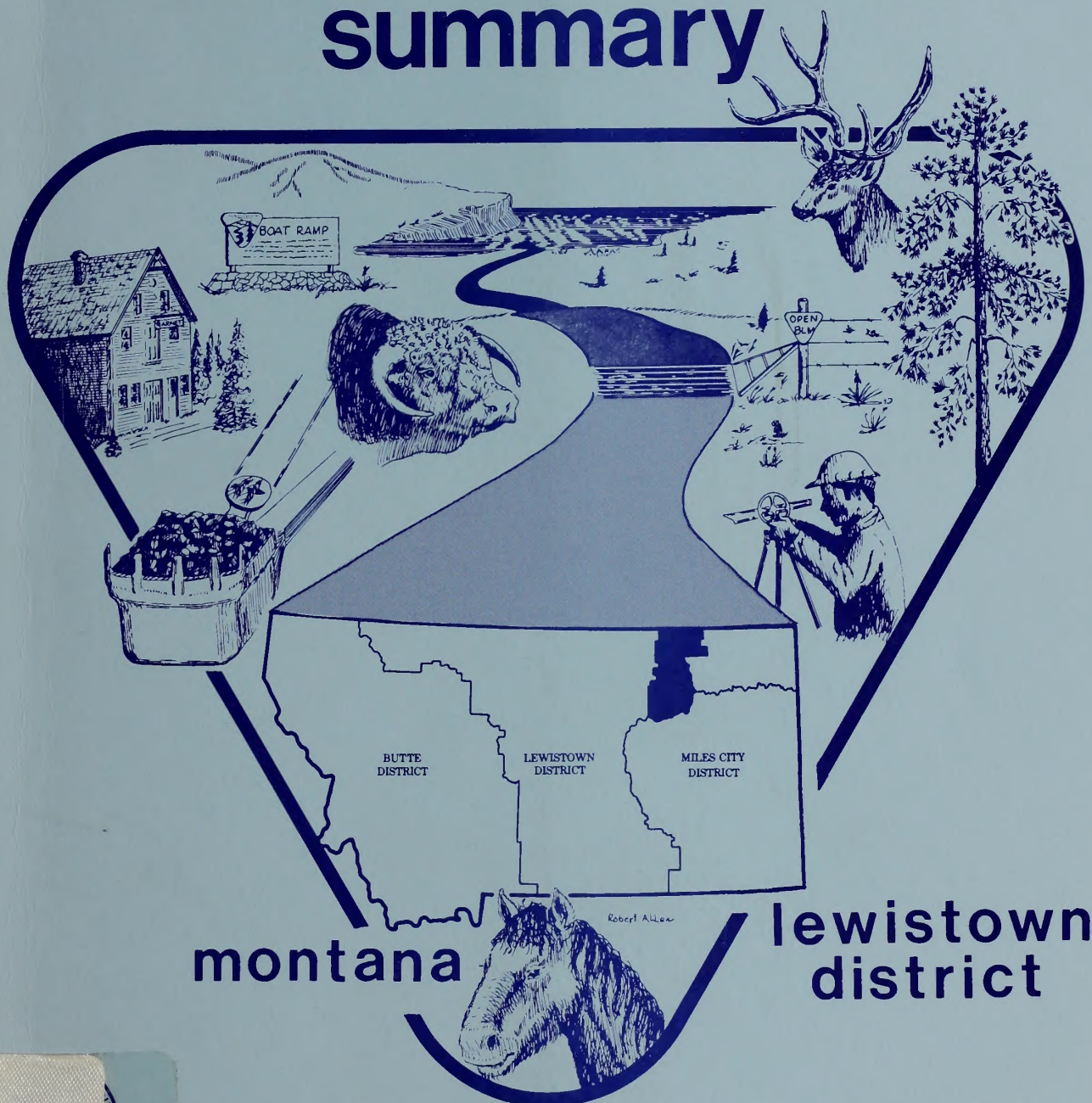
MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN

summary



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MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN

VALLEY PLANNING AREA

March 1978

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Preface

The Bureau of Land Management's Montana State organization manages resources on almost 8.4 million acres of surface land and 55 million acres of subsurface minerals in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. The Lewistown District Office is responsible for more than 3.8 million surface and 8.1 million subsurface acres. These public lands are used by many people for a variety of activities. It is BLM's responsibility to develop coordinated land use decisions which specify the best use and protection of the public's resources.

To better prepare for present and future demands on public lands, BLM has developed land use plans for many areas of the state. This publication is a summary of the land use decisions for public lands in the Valley Planning Area. While the original planning area land use decisions were approved on June 25, 1976, a portion of this area, the Willow Creek Planning Unit, has undergone recent updating with corresponding decisions and new management direction. The Willow Creek Planning Unit land use decisions will correspondingly be featured for special consideration throughout this summary.

Decisions affecting the Willow Creek Unit were made after gathering all available resource data and requesting the viewpoints of local citizens, the user public and local organizations. Every rancher who has an allotment on public lands within the planning unit was contacted during allotment management plan inventory time. Additional public input was obtained through dialogue with representatives of the Montana Department of Fish and Game and the Valley County Cooperative State Grazing Districts.

A brochure of the Valley Planning Area, featuring the proposed Willow Creek Planning Unit update, was made available to the public in early October, 1977. A public open house, preceded by local newspaper coverage, was held on October 6, 1977, in the Glasgow City-County Library for the purpose of receiving public comments.

This information, as well as the technical expertise of BLM resource specialists, was combined, analyzed and considered in formulating the land use decisions outlined on the following pages. By design, these decisions are flexible so they can deal with new demands or new conditions to help keep this Management Framework Plan current and effective.

In the interest of clarity and brevity, this report is necessarily an abbreviated version of the total planning process. Specific information not included in this report are detailed maps, detailed physical and resource inventory data, and social and economic data. These materials, as well as the other components of BLM's land use planning process, are available for public review during regular business hours at the Valley Resource Area Office in Glasgow or the Lewistown District Office in Lewistown. If you wish to review these documents, please make an appointment so we can have someone available to discuss them with you.

My staff and I thank everyone who assisted in this effort, especially those members of the public who contributed to the final product. We look forward to working with you again in developing similar plans or updating older plans as the need arises.

John F. Fields

John F. Fields
District Manager

INTRODUCTION

BLM Planning System

Under the Bureau's planning system, available information is gathered, studies are made and management decisions are developed in seven categories. These categories are lands, minerals, timber, range, watershed, wildlife habitat and recreation. In order to meet the needs of its diverse public users, BLM must effectively balance the management of these resources. Under the concept of multiple use management, all potential uses of the public's resources are equally considered and evaluated before a management framework plan (MFP) is developed and implemented.

The Bureau of Land Management has developed its land use planning system with three major components. These are Program Direction, Resource Information and Management Decisions.

Program Direction

General program direction, policies, goals and priorities are set by the President, Congress and the Secretary of the Interior. These directions are expressed in executive orders, laws, regulations and other documents.

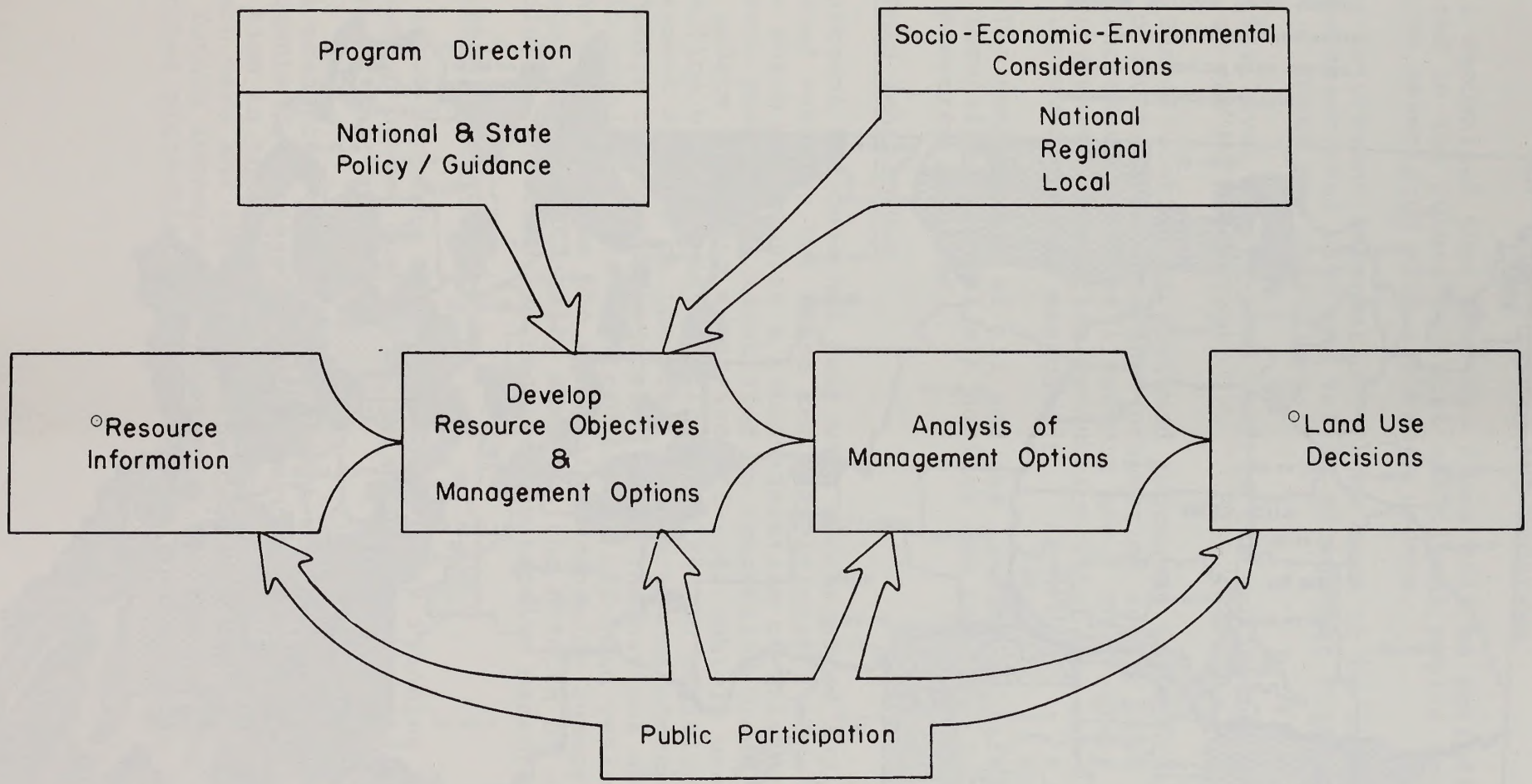
Resource Information

In initiating this phase of the planning system, BLM specialists gather all of the necessary land and resource information relative to the region under study. Each resource specialist--the forester, range conservationist, minerals specialist, watershed specialist, etc.--analyzes the situation within the planning unit area to determine current conditions, use, trends and problems concerning his resource responsibility. This analysis is then further developed to identify maximum potential for the resource use without consideration of competing or conflicting uses. The importance of this step is that each resource potential is considered individually. In addition, socio-economic data is gathered and environmental impacts are analyzed to aid in the evaluation of land use alternatives developed by the planning system. In compiling the above information, the Bureau contacts all known interests to be certain that all available data has been obtained before the planning process is completed.

Management Decisions

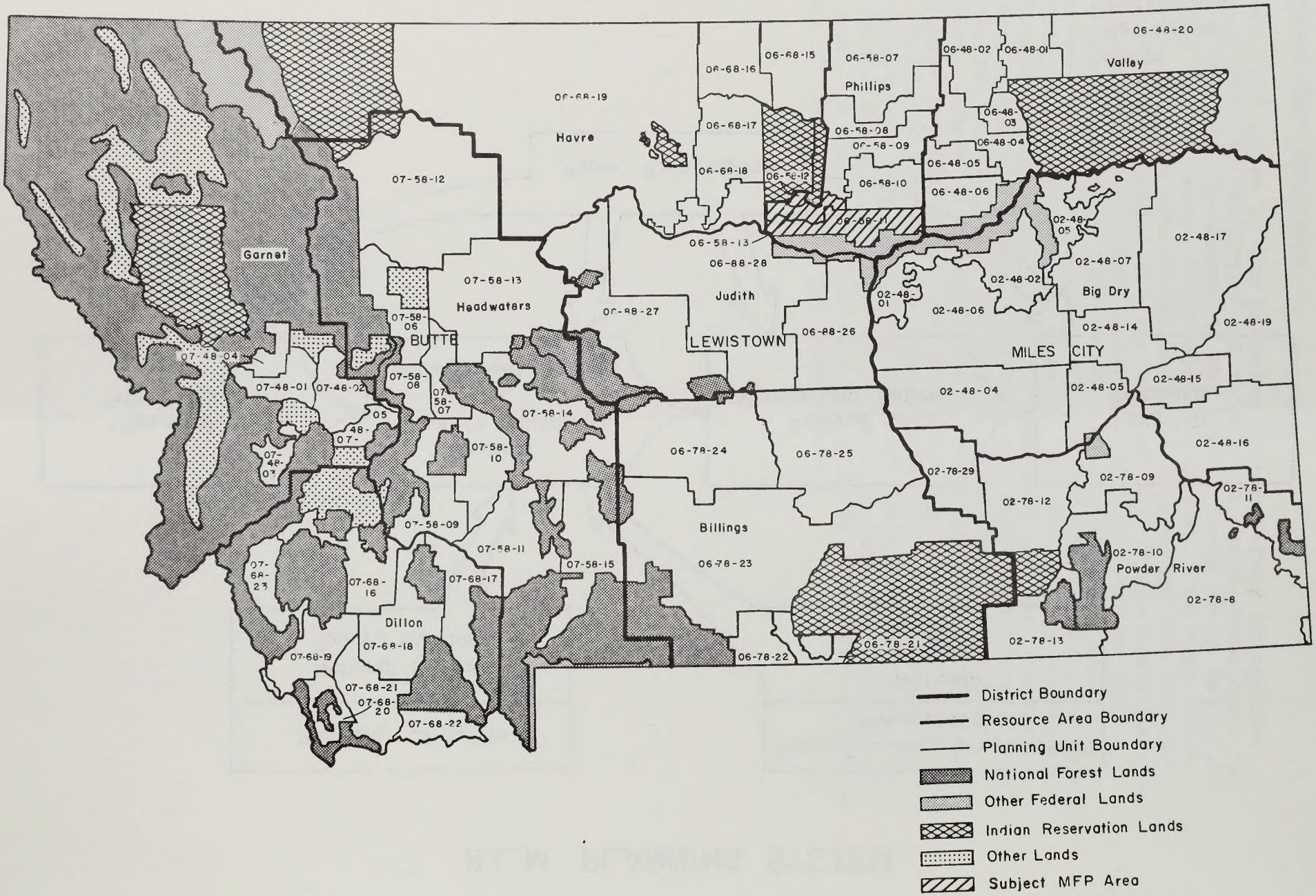
The next phase of the planning system serves to resolve resource use conflicts and to provide basic guidelines for the use and management of the public lands being analyzed. This is the heart of the planning system. At this stage, each resource specialist prepares objectives and outlines specific proposals for the optimum use of his resource based on current technology, program direction and the socio-economic needs of the region. Each individual resource proposal is then fully documented and individually presented using a map and overlay system. At this point, conflicts between various proposals for resource use are pinpointed. Possible multiple use solutions are then identified through careful analysis and the use of narratives, maps and overlays. Based on comments and information received through public participation, BLM managers are often able to develop additional resource use alternatives and multiple use solutions. The impacts of each of these alternatives are identified and analyzed in order to select the best mix of uses. A comprehensive land use plan is then developed with built-in guidelines for resource use.

B.L.M. PLANNING SYSTEM



⊙Lands
⊙Minerals
⊙Range
⊙Recreation
⊙Watersheds
⊙Timber
⊙Wildlife

MONTANA PLANNING UNITS



MAJOR ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

It is recognized that Land Use Plans will be periodically updated in the future and that additional public involvement will be associated with each such update.

Based on present information, there seem to be three major issues associated with the Valley Management Framework Plan (MFP). These are as follows:

1. The level of off-road vehicle use and damage which has or may be occurring.

2. The allocation of presumed increases in vegetative production to watershed protection rather than to an increased level of livestock use. This refers to increased vegetative production which may result from improved grazing management.

3. The continuance of oil and gas leasing activities on identified crucial elk habitat and the restrictive measures required.

Off-Road Vehicle Use

The present MFP does not deal with closures for any class of off-road vehicles but there are indications of some problem areas which may require a reconsideration of this decision. One such problem was identified in the Willow Creek Planning Unit update involving extensive off-road vehicle use in connection with archery hunting of elk. In addition to harassment effects on the elk, there are some concerns as to the damage to other resources. While indications are that public opinion favors the traditional off-road vehicle use of the past, BLM, as the responsible managing agency, will be required to continually reassess the effects of off-road vehicle use and take any required protective measures.

Watershed Allocation

This issue concerns only the Willow Creek Planning Unit (exclusive of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range) of the Valley MFP.

It is predicted that when allotment management plans are implemented, increased vegetative production will result at some time in the future. The watershed is of special concern here and accordingly the decision was made to allocate future increases of vegetation for the purpose of watershed protection and improvement. Maintaining the

present stocking rate and stability of ranch operations is apparently an acceptable goal for some ranchers. But the issue remains as to whether or not rancher incentive to participate in Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) would be reduced by the decision to allocate increased vegetation in favor of watershed.

When considering economic effects on the Willow Creek Unit, the present level of grazing rather than projected vegetative increases appears to be more significant. A Planning Area Analysis shows the present level of stocking provides 10 ranch jobs for the Willow Creek Unit while predicted increases in vegetation, if they were allocated entirely to increased livestock use, would account for only 0.4 ranch jobs.

There should be rancher incentive to participate in AMPs even if no increases in stocking are anticipated. AMPs provides other rancher benefits which further livestock operations. These include more water developments, distribution fences favorable to herd management, and a potential to realize greater weight gains per animal. AMPs in the Willow Creek Planning unit have been judged to have the capability of solving existing livestock distribution problems which could result in future reductions of animals if not implemented.

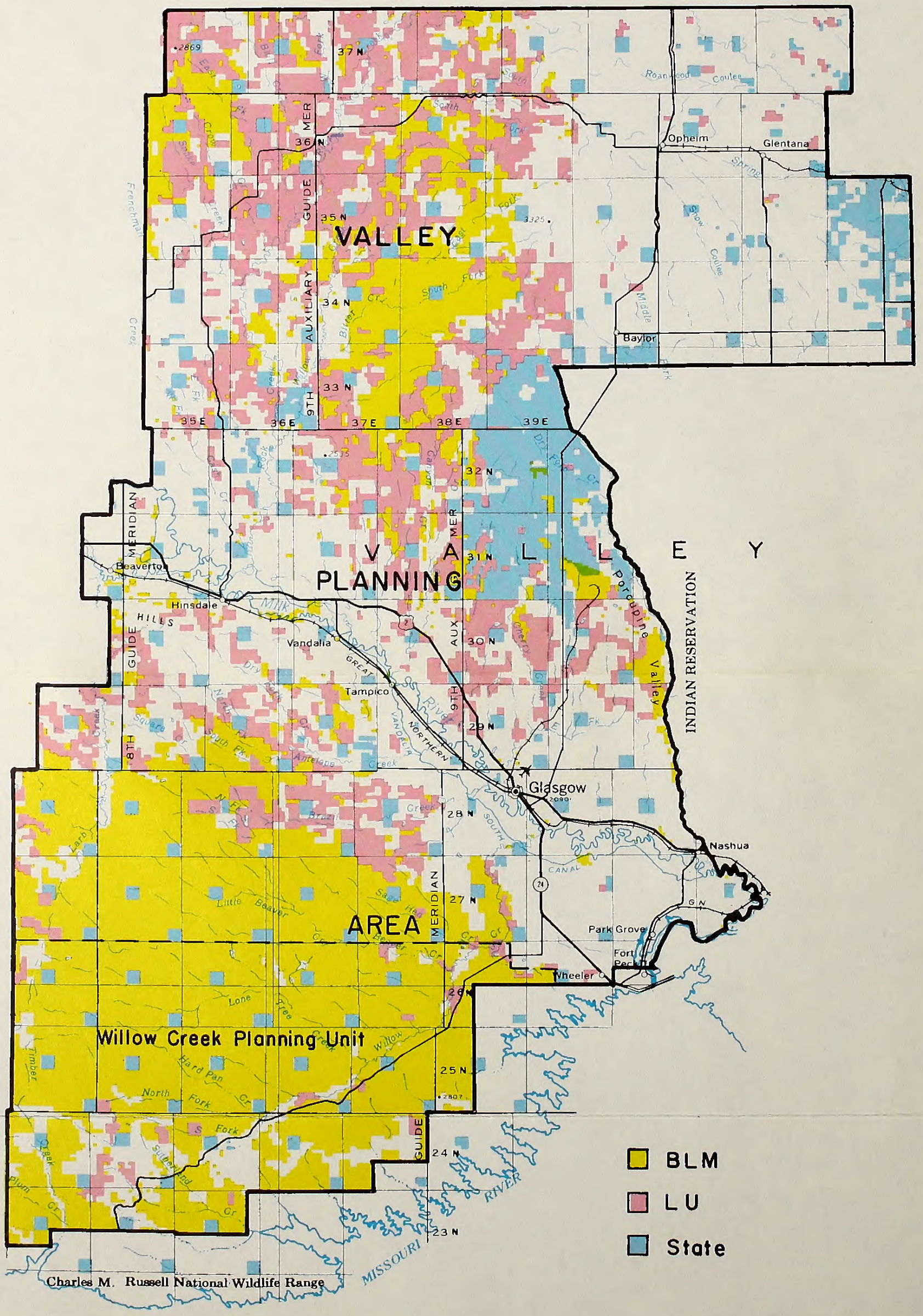
Oil and Gas Leasing Activities on Identified Elk Range

No present exploratory drilling or production is presently occurring on identified elk range. Even so, the past issuance of leases has not considered what the effects would be to the elk herd should development occur. The management decision to continue leasing these areas for oil and gas also considers special protective stipulations on all occupied elk range and the prohibition of surface occupancy on identified crucial habitat.

While there is potential for oil and gas development on these areas, definite reserves are not known. Prohibiting surface occupancy is not anticipated to prevent extraction of possible reserves. This is due to the size and shape of most identified crucial elk habitat areas. In some instances however, this protective stipulation could reduce extraction of the total reserves if they proved to be present. Intensive oil field development would result in displacement of elk from prime habitat areas which are unique because of topography and vegetative cover.

In summary, there is considerable local and regional interest in the Missouri Breaks elk herd. It is believed that the local public also favors the extraction of minerals from public lands.

VALLEY RESOURCE AREA



LANDS

Background

The Valley Planning Area encompasses a region of approximately 2.3 million acres in Valley County. The main communities within the area are Glasgow, population 4,700; Fort Peck, population 1,200; Hinsdale, population 390; and Opheim, population 306 (1970 Census).

The dominant and important physical features in this area include Porcupine Creek, forming a portion of the eastern boundary, and the Milk River. Numerous creeks dissect the planning area and flow into the Milk and Missouri Rivers.

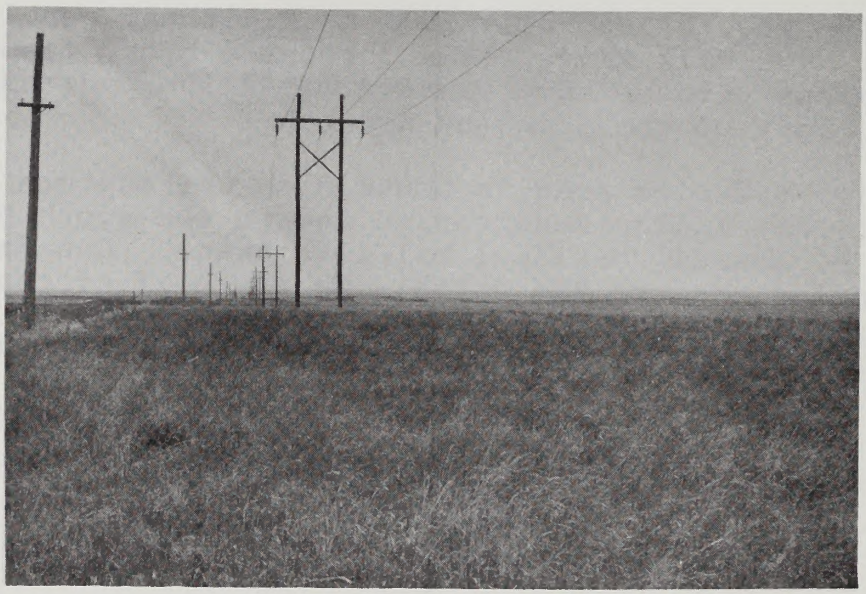
The topography is generally rolling hills and gently sloping uplands. The Milk River flows through a broad flood plain and numerous streams have created extensive badlands in the southern part of the planning area.

The Valley Planning Area is bounded on the eastern side by the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and on the south by the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range. Canada borders the planning area to the north. Nearly half of the Valley Planning Area is public lands and approximately 52 percent of the subsurface estate is in federal ownership as shown below.

	Acres Public Lands	%	Acres Other	%
Surface	1,015,000	45	1,235,418	55
Subsurface (Minerals)	1,187,379	52	1,073,039	48

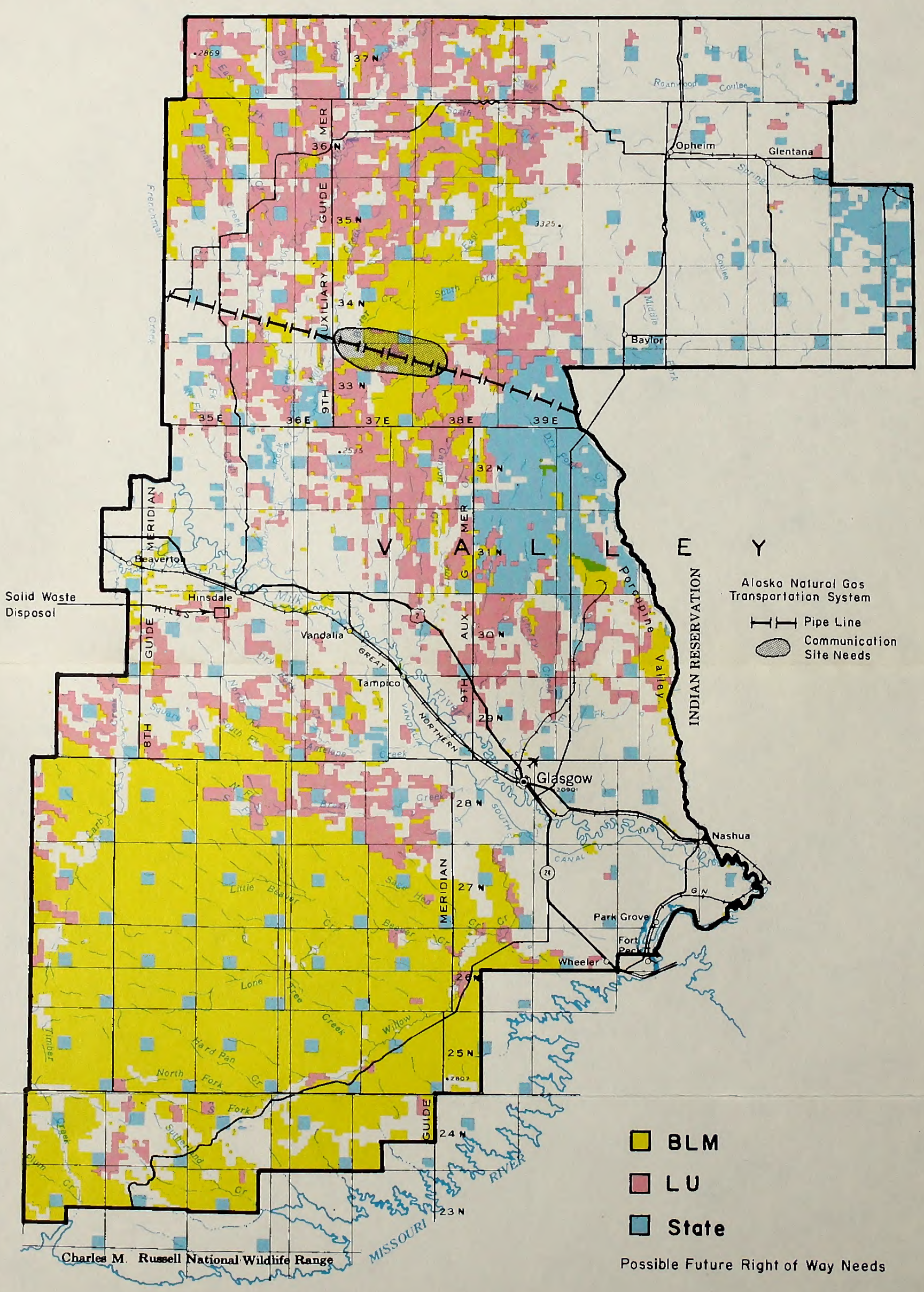
BLM's lands program is designed to meet public needs for land and to support public land management programs.

Agriculture is the major contributor to the area's economy and 22 percent of the planning area is cultivated cropland. Hay and small grains are cultivated and approximately 31,300 acres of cropland are irrigated. Nearly 77 percent of the planning area is range land.



LOCATED ON BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND, AN EXISTING POWER TRANSMISSION LINE RUNNING THROUGH VALLEY PLANNING AREA AUTHORIZED UNDER A BLM RIGHT-OF-WAY

VALLEY RESOURCE AREA



Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System

Pipe Line

Communication Site Needs

BLM

LU

State

Possible Future Right of Way Needs

Lands Resource Allocation Decisions

1. At the discretion of the Department of the Interior, allow the pipeline right-of-way for the north border section of the Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System. The granting of this right-of-way will be subject to BLM review and cultural inventory.

2. Grant rights-of-way for electric distribution lines, telephone lines (mostly buried), pipelines, tramroads and irrigation structures as the need arises over the entire planning area. Approval of these rights-of-way will be subject to careful BLM review.

3. Authorize the continued use of public lands rights-of-way for an electric distribution system for those portions not presently approved.

4. Provide tracts of public lands for public purposes as the need arises and also for specific uses as follows:
   a) Hinsdale Solid Waste Disposal Site
   b) Snake Creek School

5. Allow construction on and occupancy of public lands for communication sites. To minimize visual impacts, these sites will be subject to stipulations by a BLM review.

Environmental Overview

Several decisions provide for rights-of-way concerning the Alaska Natural Gas System and other utilities, roads, communication sites and irrigation structures. These are all subject to protective stipulations unique to each project.

In effect, there would be some adverse environmental impacts associated with disturbance at each site. These impacts may be present in various degrees of soil and vegetative disturbance and disruption to the existing landscape. The positive impacts are associated with more favorable social and economic conditions as a result of new utilities, services and communications.

Background

BLM's mineral program includes economic analysis, appraisal and development of mineral resources. Development may proceed by lease, license or permit on both public mineral estate lands (private surface and Federal minerals) and acquired mineral estate lands. The coordination of exploration and mining activities with other land uses and the provisions for protection and rehabilitation of mined lands are also an important part of the program.

Minerals present in the Valley Planning Area include sand, gravel, bentonite, coal, gas and possibly oil.

Gas and Oil

Presently, the only commercial mineral production in the planning area is taking place in the Bowdoin Dome natural gas field located in the southwest region of the planning area. There are 300 producing wells with only one well located on public land. Current annual production is put at two million cubic feet of gas for the entire field.

Exploratory drilling for oil and gas is taking place on a light scale throughout the resource area but to date no active wells have been discovered outside of the Bowdoin Dome area. At the present time, interest in gas and oil exploration is considered marginal but the entire area has been designated as potentially valuable for development.

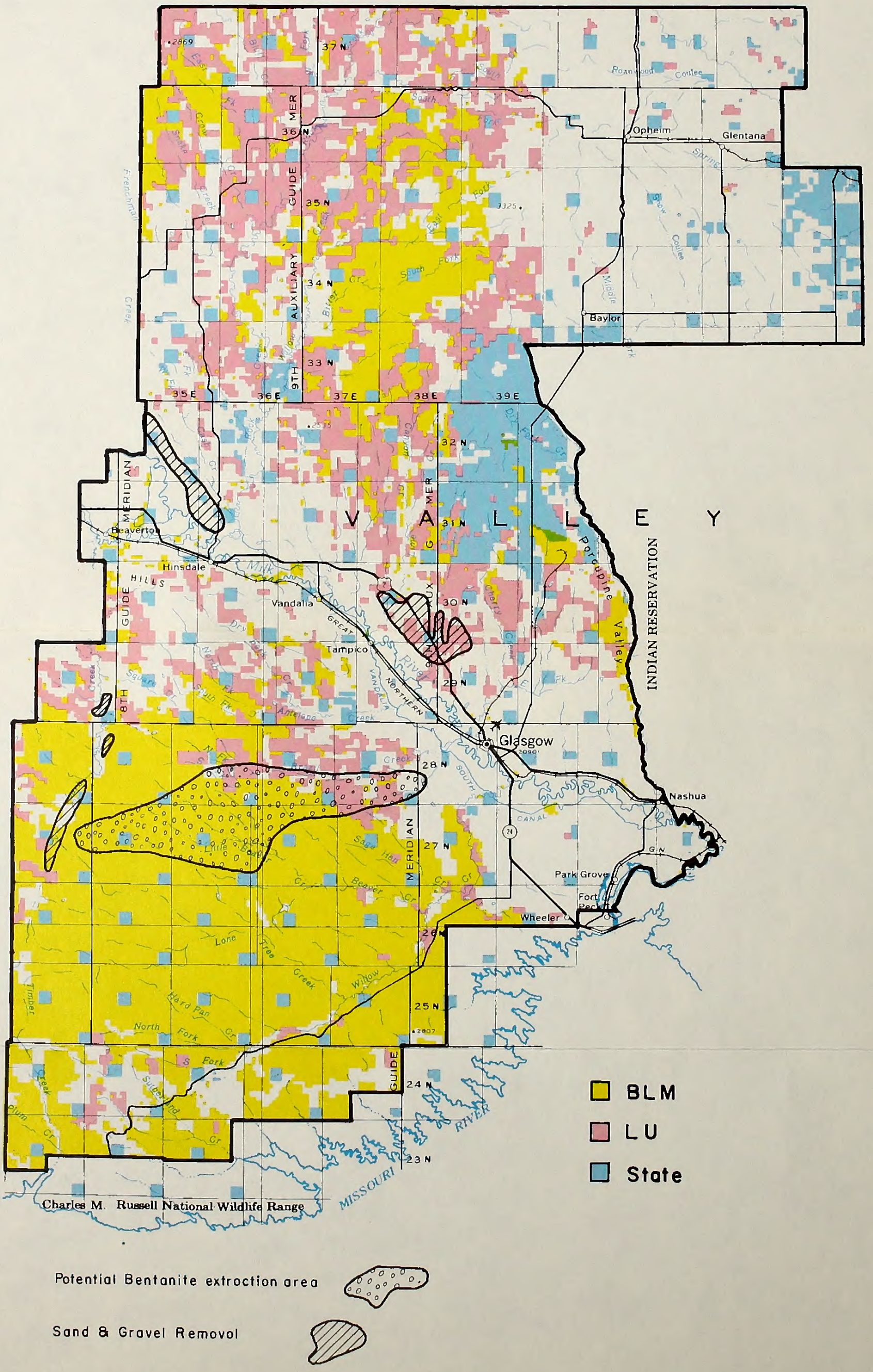
Coal

There is no record of any coal development in the planning area but small amounts may have been mined by individuals for their own use. A large and potential coal extraction area has been designated in the extreme northeast region of the planning area.

Sand and Gravel

Sand and gravel deposits are located throughout the planning area. Most notably, they are found along Porcupine Creek and in the northeast and eastern portion of the area. None of these deposits has been commercially developed to any extent, but they meet local needs for road surfacing and building.

VALLEY RESOURCE AREA



Bentonite

Large, potential extraction areas for bentonite have been designated in the south and central portions of the planning area. There is an estimated two million tons of bentonite in the Larb Creek area. This mineral is locally used to seal reservoirs that will not otherwise hold water.

Mineral Resource Allocation Decisions (A Partial Listing)

1. Allow oil and gas leasing to continue on all public lands, private surface/federal mineral estate and Bureau of Reclamation withdrawn lands. Subsequent drilling activities will be subject to environmental restrictions or requirements.

2. Allow bentonite mining under applicable law on public lands where this is determined to be economically feasible by BLM core sampling and other Bureau policy.

3. Allow sand and gravel removal from public lands in all of south Valley County and the general area along the Milk River. Surface restoration requirements should give special consideration to wildlife habitat. Any road constructed in association with gravel extraction will be restored to the previous land use unless it fits within the network of the road transportation system.

Willow Creek Planning Unit (A Partial Listing)

1. Require a lease stipulation in oil and gas leasing to disallow occupancy or disturbance of land surface within designated crucial elk habitat.

2. Allow leasing of non-energy minerals on all public lands, public mineral estate with private surface and Bureau of Reclamation withdrawn lands. Subsequent drilling activities will be subject to environmental restrictions or requirements.

Environmental Overview

Land use decisions provide for the continued leasing of all subsurface minerals subject to several stipulations for the protection of resource values. For example, surface occupancy is prohibited on identified crucial elk habitat and bentonite mining will be allowed only under applicable law. Sand and gravel can be extracted in all of south Valley

County and the general area along the Milk River. But this will be subject to site specific surface restoration requirements.

Mineral development would result in surface disturbances affecting every resource value to varying degrees. The effects would depend upon the type of mineral exploration, development and associated production facilities. The prohibition of surface occupancy on crucial elk habitat is not expected to restrict mineral extraction to a large extent due to the configuration and location of these areas. With the removal of bentonite, there are possibilities to lessen adverse impacts by providing water pits beneficial to wildlife species.

Increased drilling for oil, gas and bentonite mining would benefit the local economy of the Glasgow area which is now largely agricultural. If minerals activities were greatly accelerated, community services could be adversely affected and the local lifestyle could be modified by population increases.

FOREST PRODUCTS

Background

The soils and climatic conditions in this planning area are generally not adapted to the establishment of timber-producing species.

Approximately 16,000 acres of cottonwoods grow along the Milk River, Rock Creek and Porcupine Creek. Additionally, there are scattered stands of ponderosa pine and juniper in the southern portion of the planning area. The commercial value of this timber is limited to firewood and fence poles. Aesthetics and shade are the most adaptable uses of timber in the Valley Planning Area.

Timber Resource Allocation Decisions

Willow Creek Planning Unit

Issue free-use firewood permits for personal use on a demand basis. Allowable wood would be dead and down materials only.

Environmental Overview

Management decisions are to leave timber stands undisturbed to provide escape cover for elk and to dispose of dead and down material for firewood.

There is little, if any, measurable economic loss in the decision not to harvest timber since stands consist of scattered ponderosa pine of low commerical value. From an environmental standpoint, there are positive benefits for wildlife and aesthetics in that no modification of landscape will occur. Disposing of firewood could be considered both slightly beneficial or slightly adverse from an aesthetic standpoint.

RANGE MANAGEMENT

Background

Approximately 77 percent of the Valley Planning Area is range land. Since agriculture is the major contributor to the area economy, proper range management is important to maintain a strong economy.

The planning area has 183 operators and grazing is administered under the Taylor Grazing Act. There are 262 allotments with 154,397 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) licensed on public lands.

Range land condition is generally good to fair throughout the planning area. Some range in the southern portion of the area rates fair to poor while scattered segments of range rate excellent to good.

There are presently allotment management plans (AMPs) implemented on 27 allotments. These AMPs involve both deferred and rest rotation systems.

Range Resource Allocation Decisions (A Partial Listing)

1. Put all interim management public lands under a level of livestock management equal with the need to improve and protect the watershed values. Management can mean a simple season, number and class designation or a very complex grazing formula.

2. Continue to authorize livestock grazing on a non-AMP basis for 117 allotments through issuance of term permits based on range carrying capacity.

3. Continue investigations with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Montana State University for development of a biological approach to control leafy spurge.

4. Eliminate or control leafy spurge and other noxious weed infestations on public lands by chemical or biological methods.

5. Authorize animal damage control when consistent with other land uses and current policy and procedure. Determine specific locations of prairie dog towns and gopher communities on public lands.

6. Allocate livestock use at the present level of stocking for allotments: 4,572; 4,577-4,580; 4,586-4,589; 4,593-4,596; and 4,600. Management will be carried out under three different levels involving livestock and allotments. On-the-ground analysis does not show present stocking rates to be improper.

Resource problems seem to be related to poor livestock distribution patterns and grazing use during the same season each year.

Willow Creek Planning Unit

7. Allocate livestock use at the present levels and in conformance with existing Allotment Management Plans (AUMs) as shown below. Future changes in grazing systems can be made if a review determines that multiple use objectives are not being met.

Allotment No.	Name	Fed. AUMs
4581	Lone Tree Creek	2,772
4583	Lower Little Beaver	2,322
4585*	Lewis Reservoir	963
4590	Willow Creek	4,534
4592*	Bomber	1,025
4598*	Seven Point	2,102

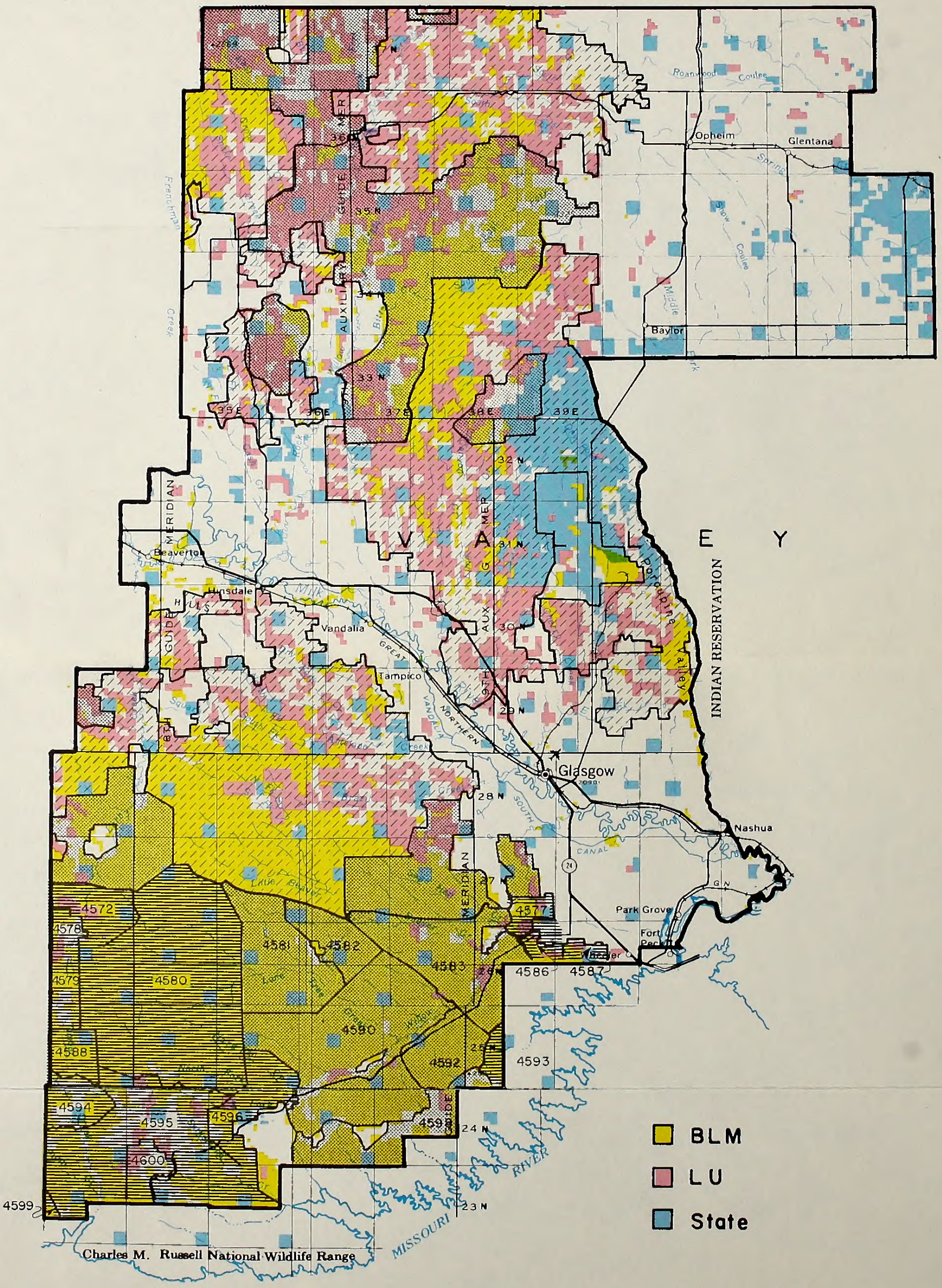
*(Continuation of existing grazing systems depends on the availability of Charles M. Russell National Game Range administered lands. Fencing of boundary may require revision of systems.)

8. Authorize livestock use on a non-Allotment Management Plan basis for terms of not more than ten years and at the present level of stocking for the following allotments:

DEPICTS TYPICAL RANGE LANDSCAPE OF NORTH VALLEY COUNTY WITH CATTLE GRAZING IN BACKGROUND.

YEARLING CATTLE GRAZING ON PUBLIC LAND NEAR RESERVOIR SITE ON A GRASSLAND RANGE TYPE. PUBLIC LANDS ARE USED BY 183 OPERATORS FOR LIVESTOCK GRAZING IN THE VALLEY PLANNING AREA.

VALLEY RESOURCE AREA



Range Management

- Existing allotment management plan
- Non-allotment management plan
- Interim management
- Management in accordance with range allocation number 8

Allot. No.	Name	Fed. AUMs
4582	Lone Tree Creek Hub	10
4584		56
4591	Sutherland	186
4597	Sutherland	7

Non-AMP management is recommended in order to concentrate management priority on larger blocks of land. There has been no identification of management problems which can and should be solved by an AMP.

Environmental Overview

Management decisions favor the continuation of providing livestock forage to stabilize the local economy. They additionally serve to put all public lands under a level of management necessary to improve or protect watershed and wildlife values. Special consideration is to be provided for crucial habitat for big game, upland birds, waterfowl species and watershed areas with more than 30 percent bare ground.

Implementation of grazing systems to solve livestock management problems have both favorable and unfavorable effects on the environment. On the positive side, vegetation and soils will be enhanced. Important wildlife habitat and some important and productive sites for livestock forage production can also be improved. From a negative aspect, additional improvements (fences, water developments, etc.) will cause new intrusive features on the landscape. On a total basis, there are more favorable benefits but the improvement of environmental values will require a greater economic output from both the range user and the Federal Government. The economic benefits realized will consist of greater livestock gains and greater ease in handling livestock. The most important benefit however, would be stable livestock operations by managing to maintain the present stocking rate. Livestock grazing on public lands is an important activity contributing to the stability of the Glasgow area.

WATERSHED

Background

The Bureau's watershed conservation and development program evaluates watershed conditions and identifies management practices to solve problems.

Geologic or natural erosion is believed to be the major contributor to soil loss and displacement in areas where erosion is considered a problem. Although man's activities accelerate erosion in parts of the planning area, it has not been determined to what extent this influence is felt.

Based on a watershed inventory, the following erosion condition classes were identified for public lands within the planning area.

	Stable	Slight	Moderate	Critical	Severe
Acres	39,030	484,545	372,144	108,479	2,040
%	4	48	37	11	--

These figures do not include approximately 12,000 acres in the northern portion of the planning area which have not been surveyed for class condition.

In addition, erosion may be classified from a hazard standpoint in which wind and water are the main causative agents. Because soils vary significantly in their susceptibility to erosion, there is a need to classify this susceptibility.

Many of the soils in the Valley Planning Area are quite susceptible to sheet, gully and streambank erosion from water. Sediment from eroded soils is a major pollutant in streams. A soil's susceptibility to water erosion may be classified into four different hazard ratings based on soil characteristics such as slope, texture, soil depth, water holding capacity, permeability and general land use. The percentage of soils within the different classes is shown below.

WATER EROSION CLASS	% OF SOILS IN THIS CLASS
Very Severe	1
Severe	26
Moderate	61
Slight	12

Although it is not specified here, streambank erosion occurs throughout the area along the major drainageways.

Wind erosion seriously threatens any area of low precipitation and where temperatures, evaporation and wind speeds are high.

In the Valley Planning Area, four percent of the total land area has a serious wind erosion hazard with the remaining portion having a moderate wind erosion hazard.

The most serious damage from wind erosion is the separation and removal of silty clay and organic matter from the surface of soils. This wind sorting action deposits coarser material in dunes that are infertile and which cover other fertile lands as well.

Watershed Resource Allocation Decisions

1. Delay any watershed tillage practices such as contour furrowing with seed treatment. The delay will continue until grazing systems are implemented and vegetation-soil studies are made to determine if such treatments are the only way to improve watershed conditions.

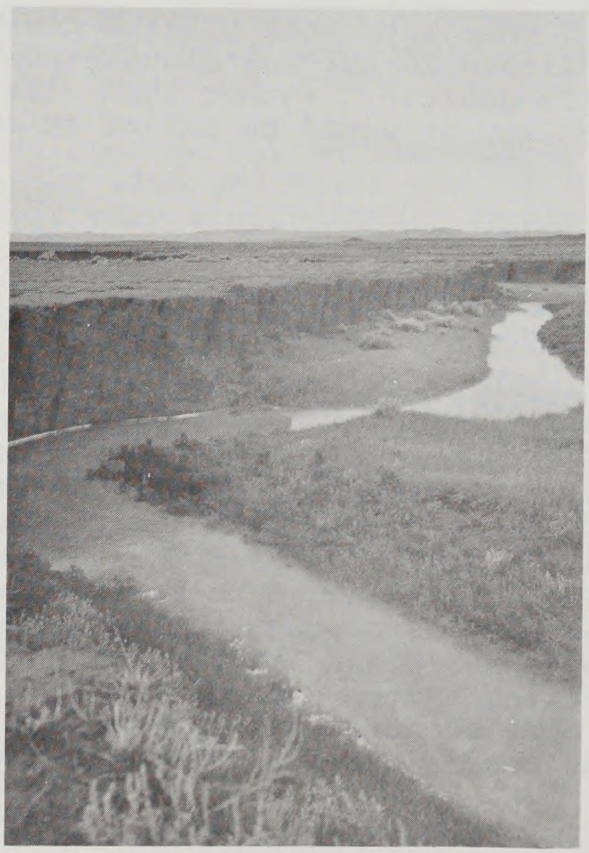
   It should be noted that watershed tillage treatments usually cause considerable surface disturbance which may affect wildlife habitat. Rather than risk a possible loss of habitat, it would be better to obtain more information first.

Willow Creek Planning Unit

2. Designate any future increased vegetation for the purpose of watershed protection and improvement.

   Watershed is of special concern in the Willow Creek planning unit. The area is highly susceptible to erosion due to soil properties, consisting primarily of texture, depth, permeability, water holding capacity and slope. There are extensive areas with more than 30 percent bare ground. While much of the soil movement presently taking place is judged to be of natural geologic origin, there is a potential to increase residual soil cover and plant litter. Livestock management by grazing system and conservative stocking rate may be the most economical and practical method to improve watershed conditions for these fragile soils.

EXAMPLE OF HEAD CUTTING EROSION WHICH HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE PAST IN WILLOW CREEK BASIN OF SOUTH VALLEY COUNTY. THE SOILS OF THE AREA HAVE NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS WHICH ARE PARTICULARLY CONDUCIVE TO THIS FORM OF EROSION.



STREAMBANK EROSION IS ACCELERATED BY RAPID RUNOFF CONDITIONS WHICH OCCUR DUE TO HIGH INTENSITY THUNDERSTORMS AND SOIL CONDITIONS.

Environmental Overview

The decision to delay watershed tillage practices until grazing management systems have been implemented would serve to maintain present landscape appearance. But it would also forego possible increased water infiltration into soils with improved vegetative cover as a possible beneficial effect. There would be little or no economic impact on the economy or social values.

The decision to manage any increased range forage on part of the planning area for the purpose of watershed protection would have a positive environmental impact. Water infiltration would be improved and an undetermined reduction in sedimentation anticipated.

WILDLIFE

Background

BLM's wildlife program promotes effective use and management of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat on the public lands. Meeting this goal involves maintaining or improving food, cover and living space for wildlife.

Hunting and fishing are some of the most popular recreational uses of the planning area. Several reservoirs stocked with fish add to the popularity of fishing in the area. Because much of the area is grassland/sagebrush, ease of movement and shooting opportunities for hunters is usually good to excellent.

The major use of wildlife in the Valley Planning Area is recreational hunting with nearly 13,000 visitor days annually. (A visitor day is defined as the participation of one person in a specific activity during any part of a 12-hour period.) In addition to hunting, viewing and photographing waterfowl is a popular activity. Canadian geese summer on the various reservoirs.

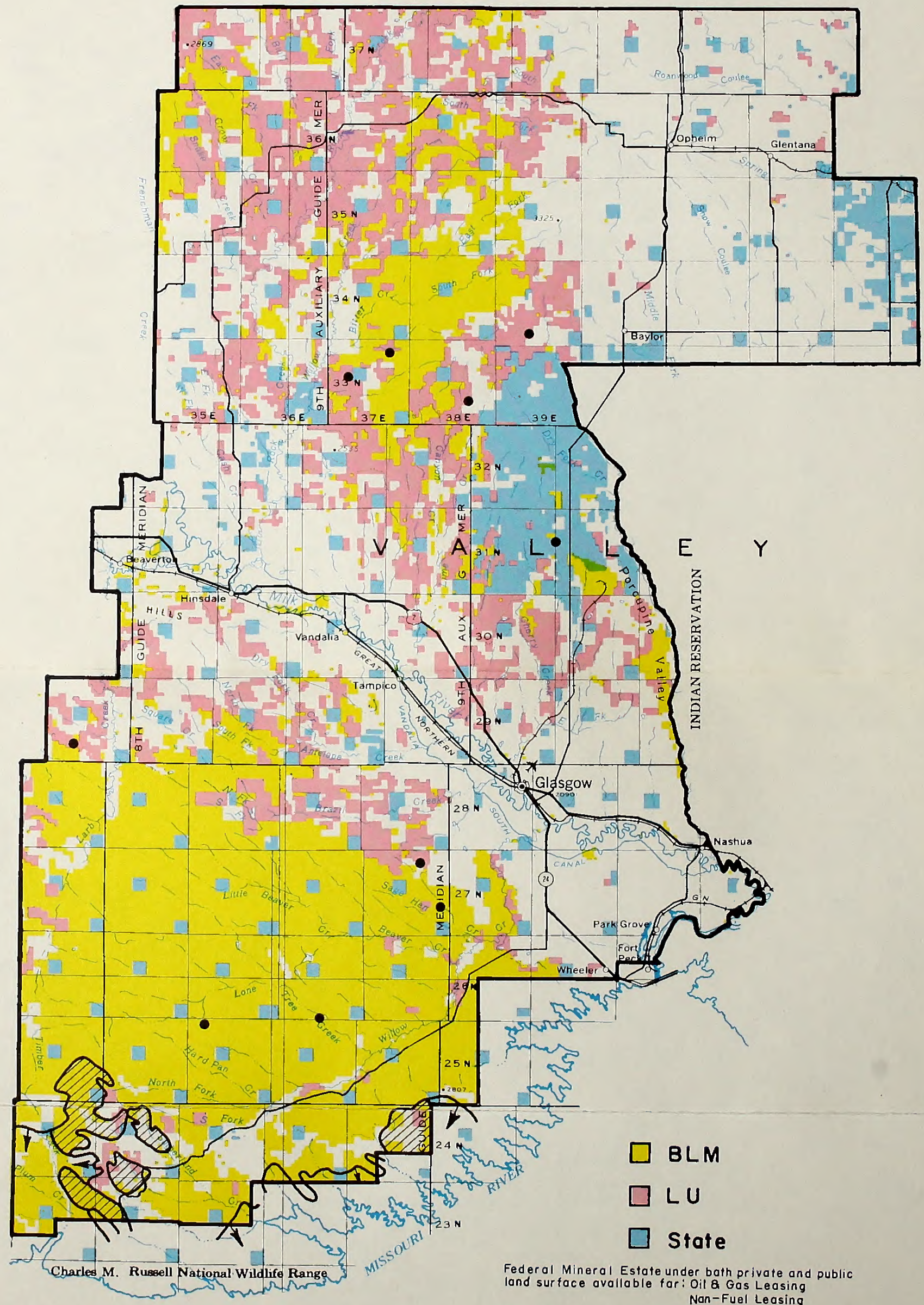
Big game species include mule deer, white-tailed deer, antelope and elk. The deer herds are recovering from a statewide decline due to unknown causes. Elk hunting in the planning area is excellent. The Missouri Breaks herd is one of the healthiest and most productive in the United States. Archery is quite popular with sportsmen in hunting this herd.

Several animals are not listed as game animals in Montana and can be hunted year around with no limit. These include cottontail rabbits, jackrabbits and coyotes.

Upland bird species present in the planning area include pheasant, hungarian partridge, sharp-tailed grouse and sage grouse. The populations of all these birds are high and shooting opportunities are excellent.

Waterfowl hunting is also popular and ease of movement and shooting opportunities are excellent. Because of the many area reservoirs, the bird populations are high. A listing of public lands wildlife habitat by species in the Valley Planning Area is shown is shown in the following chart.

VALLEY RESOURCE AREA



Species	Acres of Habitat on Public Lands
Antelope	455,000
White-tailed Deer	14,000
Mule Deer	676,000
Elk	80,000
Ringnecked Pheasant	15,000
Sharp-tailed Grouse	321,000
Sage Grouse	437,000
Hungarian Partridge	734,000
Ducks	3,839,000 (Surface Acres)
Canada Geese	Related directly to nesting islands

Prairie dog towns have been increasing in both number and size in recent years. These dog towns represent potential habitat for the endangered black-footed ferret and for the rare burrowing owl.

Since the early 1960s, widespread development of stock dams, detention dams and waterspreading systems have produced many new water areas in Valley County. These water areas are used by ducks and geese from spring to fall.

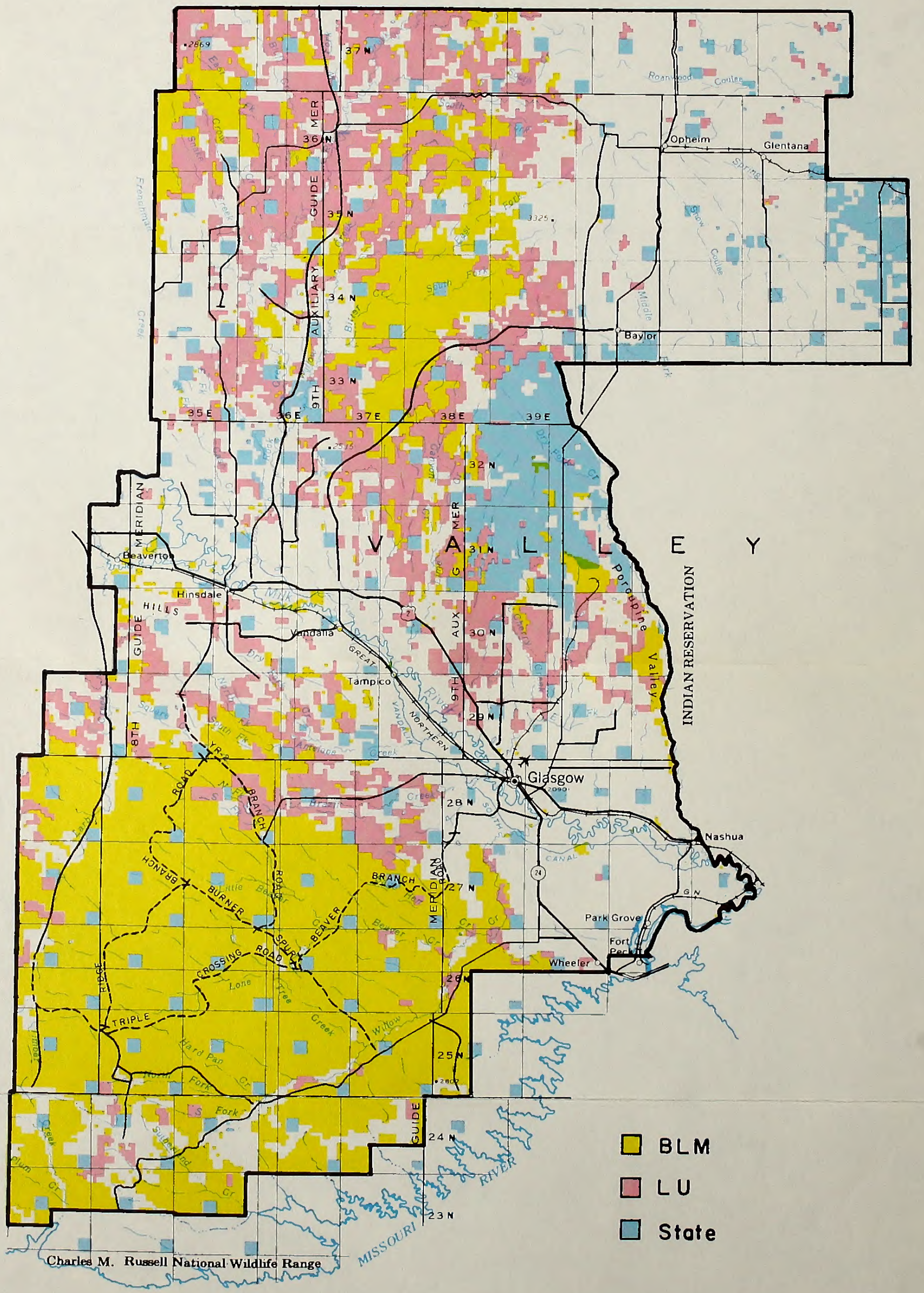
An important part of the wildlife management program for the Valley Planning Area has been the construction of reservoir islands. To date, at least one island has been built in each of 32 reservoirs in the county. The preference for islands by nesting geese in this area is well documented and there is a higher nesting success from these mammal-free sites. Many species of ducks are also readily attracted to island habitat.

Wildlife Resource Allocation Decisions (A Partial Listing)

1. Develop additional waterfowl habitat on public lands where potential exists. Modify existing reservoirs which have potential for waterfowl habitat during maintenance.

MANY WATER IMPOUNDMENTS HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED ON PUBLIC LAND IN THE VALLEY PLANNING AREA. THEY ARE PRIMARILY USED FOR DETENTION OF FLOOD FLOWS, LIVESTOCK WATER FACILITIES, AND TO PROVIDE VALUABLE HABITAT FOR MANY SPECIES OF WILDLIFE IN THE AREA.

VALLEY RESOURCE AREA



~~~ BLM roads planned for maintenance and upgrading.

All BLM lands open to off-road vehicle use.
~~~

2. Create sport fisheries in existing and new reservoirs by means of a fish planting program with the Montana Department of Fish and Game. Develop five new fishery reservoirs at selected locations.

3. Improve documentation of sharp-tailed grouse habitat and the relationship to possible conflicts stemming from the use of insecticides on private land.

   The use of insecticides has a lethal impact on sharp-tailed chicks and reduces the grouse's food supply which consists largely of grasshoppers and beetles.

4. Maintain the present road and trail system and acquire legal access to public lands for the utilization of fish and wildlife resources.

Willow Creek Planning Unit

5. Continue to provide seasonal habitat (approximately six months) to meet spring, summer and early fall needs for up to 170 elk on Harper Ridge (the west herd). This is an allocation of 512 AUMs of forage use to elk.

6. Continue to provide seasonal habitat (approximately six months) to meet winter, early spring and fall needs for up to 80 elk in the Pines herd. Combined with the Harper Ridge herd, this totals 250 elk for the planning area. This is an allocation of 239 AUMs of forage use to elk.

7. Leave timber undisturbed as cover for elk on traditional summer and winter range in south Valley County.

   Very little timber exists on public lands in south Valley County. What timber there is lies mostly along lands bordering the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range. This area serves as important yearlong elk habitat. The commercial value of the timber is low but its value as game cover is at a premium. Only a limited amount of any other type of cover is found in that area.

8. Cooperate with efforts by the Montana Fish and Game Department to reduce illegal harassment of elk during the archery season. This decision is made in consideration of uncontrolled off road vehicle (ORV) use of public lands.

ADAPTING TO THE TERRAIN OF OPEN AREAS AND BRUSHY DRAWS, ELK THRIVE IN THIS HABITAT TYPICAL OF SOUTH VALLEY COUNTY.

Environmental Overview

The management decisions to develop additional waterfowl and fisheries habitat imply there would be negative impacts due to disturbance of the existing landscape features. This will be offset by the creation of new wildlife habitat, yielding larger wildlife populations and greater opportunities for recreation. The economic benefits would be primarily through successful establishment of additional fisheries. Social values, if affected at all, would be enhanced.

The management decisions to provide elk habitat for two herds is significant from an economic standpoint. A large expenditure is made annually in the hunting of elk in Valley County. The widespread interest in these elk herds is the result of their somewhat unique status among the wildlife resources. Seasonal observations of elk are an anticipated occurrence and routinely expected by the Glasgow community.

RECREATION

Background

BLM has no developed recreation sites in the Valley Resource Area but fishing and hunting activities are popular. Through cooperation with the Montana Fish and Game Department, 12 reservoirs on public lands have been stocked with fish. The species stocked were trout, bass, northern pike, black bullhead and catfish.

There are several historical sites in the planning area including a portion of Sitting Bull's Trail. Running from Canada to the United States, this trail was used by the Sioux Chief Sitting Bull and his tribe. To date, the trail has been poorly preserved. "Miles Place" is the remains site of an old stone home and spring house located solely on BLM land. While there are many archaeological sites in the Valley Planning Area, only a few of these have had scientific review.

Collecting is a small part of the recreational use on public lands in the Valley Planning Area but fossil hunting and rock hounding do occur throughout the area.

Recreation Resource Allocation Decisions (A Partial Listing)

1. Place signs to identify existing public lands which provide recreational opportunities. Examples would be fishing, scenic areas, hunting access and antiquities sites. Signing needs should be identified following an inventory dealing with recreation use and access needs.

2. Continue to allow unrestricted off-road vehicle (ORV) use of public lands. A potential conflict may develop between this and wildlife decision number eight which will require future analysis and resolution.

3. Complete a Visual Resource Inventory and Evaluation along with other inventories.

4. Fence suitable existing reservoirs to protect wildlife habitat.

Willow Creek Planning Unit

5. Protective fencing will not be deemed necessary for each fisheries reservoir at this time. The need for

This kind of protection will be evaluated on a case by case basis as well as consideration of other recreational improvements needed (such improvements as roads, sanitary facilities, picnic tables, etc.).

6. Stock new fishing reservoirs with such species as northern pike, yellow perch, channel catfish, large-mouth bass, walleye and crappie. Reservoirs with better water quality may also be stocked with trout.

7. Prepare a brochure for photographers and nature observers as an aid to assist the public having these interests.

8. Provide cattleguards on existing and proposed fences where public access problems have occurred or are likely to occur. Provide metal gate openers on existing fences where poor gates are resulting in conflicts between recreational users and range users.

9. Continue cultural sites inventory on public lands at a five (5) percent sample per year.

Environmental Overview

The decision to allow unrestricted off-road-vehicle use correlates very strongly with local attitudes and expections which are to continue ORV use as in the past. While unrestricted ORV use is the personal preferences of many, it may also be contrary to social attitudes of others. This decision also results in a certain amount of disruption and disturbance to soil, vegetation and other values.

The decision to consider protective fencing for some reservoirs offers both positive and negative environmental effects. Some disruption of the natural environment is required in order to improve wildlife habitat for recreation related activities.

The decisions to provide signs and cattleguards are based on existing social values. To provide these improvements will result in some minor disruptions to the existing landscape.

INTERRELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PLANS

A number of decisions in this management framework plan deal with livestock grazing in allotments which encompass both BLM and C.M. Russell National Wildlife Range managed lands. These decisions were arrived at with minimal consideration of planning and coordination with the Wildlife Range.

A new thrust in planning on the Wildlife Range is in its initial stages, and consequently, suitable guidance from this planning was not available for consideration and integration into the Valley Management Framework Plan.

It is possible that BLM plans and decisions may not be fully compatible with management across the boundary in the Wildlife Range. It is also likely that as the range planning is completed, it will be necessary for the BLM to reevaluate some decisions and possibly make adjustments.

The Ft. Peck Indian Reservation currently has no comprehensive multiple use plans; however, the reservation does have a multiple use policy which stresses management for the highest and best uses based on detailed resource inventories. BLM management decisions for protection and enhancement of watershed, wildlife habitat, aesthetic resources and maintenance of livestock management levels should indirectly benefit the reservation. There do not appear to be any BLM resource allocations which would adversely affect the cultural values or lifestyle on the reservation.

MISSOURI RIVER BREAKS GRAZING MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT AND VALLEY MFP AREA

MFP Summary Area

CANADA

FORT BELKNAP INDIAN RESERVATION

PHILLIPS

VALLEY

N

LITTLE ROCKIES

SOUTH BEARPAW

ZORTMAN

UL BEND

WILLOW CREEK

McCONE

C. M. RUSSELL N.W.R.

C. M. RUSSELL N.W.R.

HAXBY

MUSSELSHELL

FERGUS

BELT MOUNTAINS

PETROLEUM

These areas, along with the C.M. Russell National Wildlife Range, are excluded from the Missouri Breaks Grazing Management Environmental Statement.

10 0 10 20 30 40

Miles

ACTIONS AFTER THE MFP

The Valley Management Framework Plan will be followed by on-the-ground actions based on the plan's decisions. These actions will be subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, except for those which are non-discretionary due to other federal laws. Examples would be wilderness review and/or withdrawal and protection of federally-listed endangered or threatened species. Environmental assessments will be prepared for each action whether it is initiated by others or the BLM. In some cases, another federal agency may have primary responsibility for preparing an assessment but with BLM representatives participating. If the impacts of the proposed action are unacceptable or do not provide a reasonable social, environmental and economic return, the proposed action may be modified or rejected.

The implementation of allotment management plans and issuance of BLM grazing licenses/permits will be the subject of the "Missouri River Breaks Grazing Environmental Statement." This statement will describe the impacts of land use decisions, including allotment management plans and the allocation of vegetative resources in ten planning units. Note that while the C.M. Russell National Wildlife Range is surrounded by the statement area, it is not directly subject to its analysis. This statement is currently scheduled for completion by August 1979 by the BLM Montana State Office, Branch of Environmental Coordination.

The on-the-ground actions initiated by BLM are also dependent upon necessary funding by Congress. Accordingly, it may be some time before some of these decisions are carried out. Implementation is also dependent upon completion of wilderness review as required in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

Any major changes in this plan will be subject to public review and comment. It is anticipated that this plan will provide the basis for resource management to both the District and Resource Area staffs for approximately three years. A program of resource inventory will continue to monitor any changes which may lead to modification of resource use. Significant changes in Federal, State or public policy or attitudes may also cause revision of this management framework plan.

MONTANA BLM ORGANIZATION

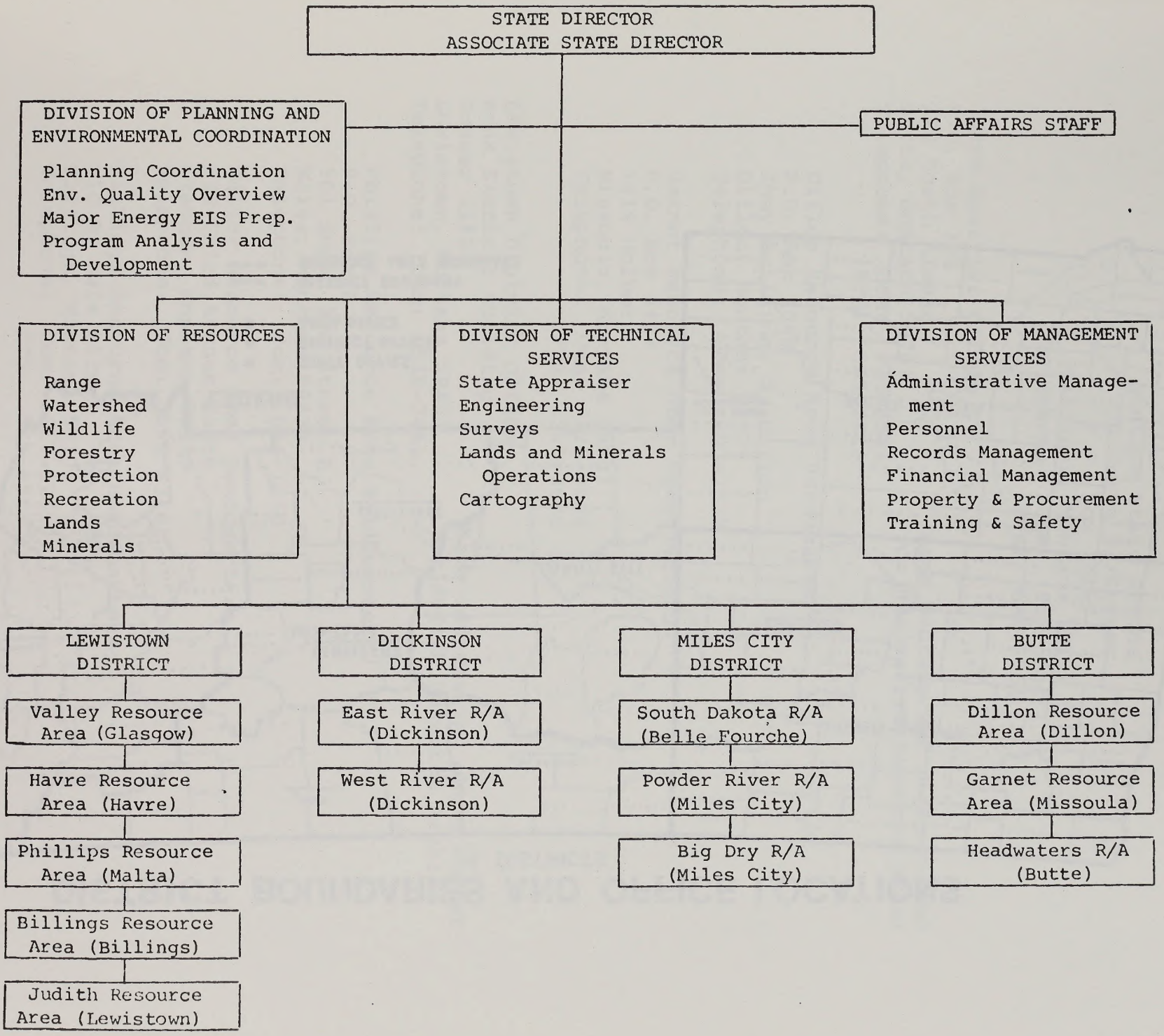
The Bureau's work in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota is administered from a State Office headquarters located in Billings, Montana. Within these three states, the 8.4 million surface acres and 55 million* subsurface acres of public lands are further divided administratively into four districts with District Offices in Butte, Lewistown, and Miles City; and Dickinson, North Dakota. Each District is divided into Resource Areas to facilitate day to day administration and long term management on a multiple use basis.

The surface and subsurface acreages administered by the four BLM Districts are noted in the table below:

ACREAGE STATISTICS
MONTANA BLM ORGANIZATION

DISTRICT	SURFACE OWNERSHIP BLM	SURFACE OWNERSHIP OTHER	SUBSURFACE OWNERSHIP BLM	SUBSURFACE OWNERSHIP OTHER	TOTAL ALL OWNERSHIP
Butte	1,334,000	33,456,400	2,285,345	32,505,054	34,790,400
Lewistown	3,884,701	33,167,885	8,177,983	28,879,603	37,057,586
Miles City					
Montana	2,785,299	17,363,119	10,910,741	9,237,677	20,148,418
S.Dakota	276,000	48,335,200	800,000	47,811,200	48,611,200
Dickinson	68,000	44,266,720	4,968,000	39,366,720	44,334,720

*BLM directly administers approximately 28 million acres of mineral estate and is the leasing agent to an additional 27 million acres of land administered by other federal agencies.


STATE DIRECTOR
ASSOCIATE STATE DIRECTOR
DIVISION OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATION
Planning Coordination
Env. Quality Overview
Major Energy EIS Prep.
Program Analysis and Development
PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF
DIVISION OF RESOURCES
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Watershed
Wildlife
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Minerals
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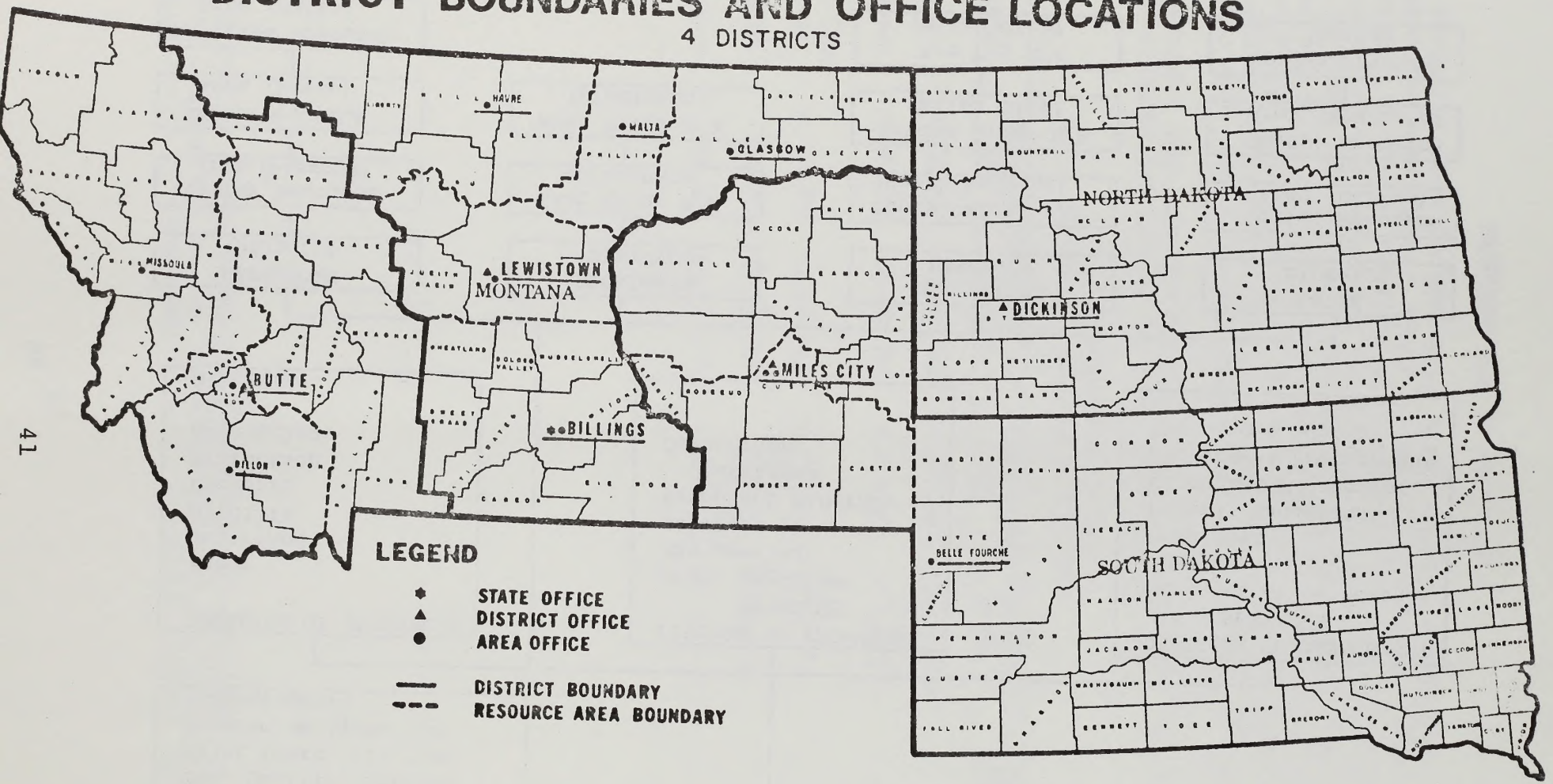
Engineering
Surveys
Lands and Minerals Operations
Cartography
DIVISION OF MANAGEMENT SERVICES
Administrative Management
Personnel
Records Management
Financial Management
Property & Procurement
Training & Safety
LEWISTOWN DISTRICT
Valley Resource Area (Glasgow)
Havre Resource Area (Havre)
Phillips Resource Area (Malta)
Billings Resource Area (Billings)
Judith Resource Area (Lewistown)
DICKINSON DISTRICT
East River R/A (Dickinson)
West River R/A (Dickinson)
MILES CITY DISTRICT
South Dakota R/A (Belle Fourche)
Powder River R/A (Miles City)
Big Dry R/A (Miles City)
BUTTE DISTRICT
Dillon Resource Area (Dillon)
Garnet Resource Area (Missoula)
Headwaters R/A (Butte)

DISTRICT BOUNDARIES AND OFFICE LOCATIONS

4 DISTRICTS



ADDRESSES
Montana BLM Organization

Montana State Office
222 North 32 Street
P.O. Box 30157
Billings, Montana 59101
Telephone: Com: 657-6561
FTS: 585-6561

Butte District Office
P.O. Box 308
220 North Alaska
Butte, Montana 59701
Telephone: Com: 723-6561
FTS: 585-2416

(Same address and phone number for Headwaters Resource Area)

Dillon Resource Area Headquarters
P.O. Box 1048
Ibey Building, N. Dillon
Dillon, Montana 59725
Telephone: Com: 683-2337

Garnet Resource Area Headquarters
P.O. Box 4427
1819 Holborn
Missoula, Montana 59801
Telephone: Com: 329-3686
FTS: 585-3686

Lewistown District Office
Bank Electric Building
Drawer 1160
Lewistown, Montana 59457
Telephone: Com: 538-7461

(Same address and phone number for Judith Resource Area)

Phillips Resource Area Headquarters
P.O. Box B
501 South 2nd Street E
Malta, Montana 59538
Telephone: Com: 654-1240

Valley Resource Area Headquarters
626 Third Avenue South
Glasgow, Montana 59230
Telephone: Com: 228-4316

Billings Resource Area Headquarters
810 E. Main Street
Billings, Montana 59101
Telephone: Com: 657-6262
FTS: 585-6262

Havre Resource Area Headquarters
Post Office Building
Drawer 911
Havre, Montana 59501
Telephone: Com: 265-5891

Miles City District Office
P.O. Box 940
West of Miles City
Miles City, Montana 59310
Telephone: Com: 232-4331

(Same address and phone number for Powder River and Big Dry Resource Areas)

South Dakota Resource Area Headquarters
310 Roundup Street
Belle Fourche, South Dakota 57717
Telephone: Com: 892-2526

Dickinson District Office
P.O. Box 1229
Pulver Hall
Dickinson, North Dakota 58601
Telephone: Com: 225-9148

GLOSSARY

ACTIVITY PLAN. Detailed action plans for specific program activities. Examples include Allotment Management Plans, Habitat Management Plans, Recreation Site Development Plans, etc.

AESTHETICS. Dealing with the sense of the beautiful and with judgements concerning beauty.

ALLOTMENT (GRAZING ALLOTMENT). An area of land where one or more individuals graze their livestock. It generally consists of BLM lands but may include parcels of private or state owned lands. The number of livestock and season(s) of use are stipulated for each allotment. An allotment may consist of several pastures or be only one pasture.

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (AMP). A concisely written program of livestock grazing management, including supportive measures if required, designed to attain specific management goals in a grazing allotment.

ANIMAL UNIT MONTH. A standardized unit of measurement of the amount of forage necessary for the complete sustenance of one animal unit for a period of one month; also a unit of measurement of grazing privileges which represents the privilege of grazing one animal unit for a period of one month.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SITE. Site which contains objects of antiquity or cultural values relating to history, or prehistory.

CULTURAL RESOURCES. A term that includes resources of historical, archaeological, or architectural significance, which are fragile, limited, and nonrenewable portions of the human environment.

DEFERRED ROTATION GRAZING. The discontinuance of livestock grazing on various parts of a range in succeeding years, allowing each part to rest successively during the growing season to permit seed production, establishment of seedlings, or restoration of plant vigor.

ECOLOGY. A study of animals and plants in their relation to each other and to their environment.

ENDANGERED OR THREATENED STATUS. Determined for plants and animals by any one or a combination of the following factors: (1) the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; (2) overutilization for commercial, sporting, scientific or educational purposes; (3) disease or predation; (4) the adequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or (5) other natural or man-made factors affecting its continued existence.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT RECORD (EAR). A concisely written record of environmental factors in land management actions.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT (ES). A written analysis of the impacts of a proposed project (e.g., grazing program) on the environment.

EXCLOSURES. An area protected (usually by fences) against the entrance of unwanted animals.

FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976 (FLPMA). Public Law 94-579, October 21, 1976, often referred to as the BLM "Organic Act" which provides the majority of BLM's legislated authority, direction, policy and basic management guidance.

FORAGE ALLOCATION. The percent of average annual forage production allocated in the land use decision process to a given activity (i.e., domestic livestock wildlife, water protection and enhancement, wild and free-roaming horses and burros).

IMPACT. Negative or positive effects on social, economic, institutional, environmental and other resource values.

LAND USE DECISIONS. Resource allocations which resolve on-the-ground conflicts generated by attempting to fully implement all activities on the same general area of land. The decision reflects social, economic, environmental, political and interagency considerations.

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN (MFP). A planning decision document which establishes, for a given planning area, land use allocations, coordination guidelines for multiple use, and management objectives to be achieved for each class of land use or protection. It is the Bureau's land use plan. It is prepared in three steps: Step 1 - Resource Recommendations; Step 2 - Impact Analysis and Alternative Development; and Step 3 - Decisionmaking.

MULTIPLE USE MANAGEMENT. Coordinated management of the various surface and sub-surface resources, without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land, that will best meet the present and future needs of the people.

NON-DISCRETIONARY. Actions required by federal law, court or Executive Order, i.e., protection of designated, endangered, or threatened plants and animals, protection of designated historical or archaeological sites, etc.

PALEONTOLOGICAL SITE. Areas with known evidence of prehistoric forms of life (plant and animal fossils).

PLANNING UNIT. A geographic unit within a Bureau of Land Management district which includes related lands, resources, and use pressure problems which are considered together for resource inventory and planning.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION. See LAND USE DECISION

REST ROTATION GRAZING SYSTEM. A grazing system providing for systematic and sequential grazing by livestock and resting from livestock use on a range area to provide for the production of livestock while simultaneously maintaining or improving the vegetation and soil fertility.

RIPARIAN. Situated on or pertaining to the bank of a river, stream or other body of water.

SUSTAINED YIELD. The achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high-level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the public lands consistent with multiple use.

WATERSHED. A basin or region draining into a creek, stream, river, river system, or body of water.

WITHDRAWAL. An action which withdraws described public lands from operation of certain laws which are also described in the withdrawal order.

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Management framework
planning area.

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